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NIC 22152
RFC 625

ON LINE HOSTNAMES SERVICE

We agree with the suggestion in RFC 623 that more than one Host should be responsible for maintaining a copy of the Hostnames data base. The NIC is certainly willing to continue to maintain the master data base, and make it available to any secondary Host that volunteers to maintain a copy. We would be pleased to have UCSB serve as one of the secondary Hosts.

However, we disagree with the suggestion in RFC 623 that a server process should be implemented to give user processes access to the official Hostnames file at the NIC. The file in question is a sequential file and it seems to us that FTP is entirely appropriate for this need. As far as setting up common login parameters among the servers, this doesn't appear to be a major problem. Even with a user/server process, there would be a requirement for additional protocol agreements, so it doesn't seem that much of an added burden to decide on common login parameters when using FTP.

We are puzzled by the apparent distaste for FTP. In our opinion, the goal has been to set up a Network file transfer mechanism that everyone can use for a variety of needs without further programming required. If FTP is that bad, shouldn't the criticism and work be directed towards improving or replacing it, rather than making end runs around it? FTP is surely more complex than is required for any particular application including this one, but isn't that true by definition of a general facility?

We also prefer to maintain the file in ASCII. It is easier, it seems to us, to check out data or data transfer problems in that form rather than in binary.